

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, November 15th, 2011 Press Contact: Ryan Nickel
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WASHINGTON, D.C., November 15th- House Appropriations Committee Ranking Democratic Member Rep. Norm Dicks made the following statement after release of the Conference Report making Appropriations for Agriculture, Commerce-Justice-Science and Transportation-HUD:

"This conference report represents a compromise agreement between both political parties and chambers of congress. After over a week of negotiations, nobody got everything they wanted but common ground has been found. The conference agreement restores funding to many programs and agencies House Republicans proposed eliminating or inadequately funding. Funding for law enforcement, food safety, nutrition, science research, transportation and housing have been given acceptable appropriations for the FY2012 fiscal year. Also, many highly partisan riders such as those blocking financial reform, climate change efforts and women's health funding have been dropped from the final agreement.

"Regrettably, funding for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission is still not adequate but I hope to continue discussing this agency's budget with my Republican colleagues.

"Both the House and the Senate should quickly pass this measure and immediately begin consideration of the next round of Appropriations measures. It's my hope that we can conference the remainder of the FY12 budget in a similar manner - strongly emphasizing reasonable compromise. I can't stress enough how imperative it is that we continue to make progress on the FY12 budget. We must continue to responsibly fund programs that promote economic growth and create jobs; this is what Americans expect of their government."

Below is a brief summary of the conference report:

Continuing Resolution until December 16th: The conference agreement contains a continuing resolution or "CR" that funds the government at the current level outlined in the previous CR (P.L.112-36) which expires on November 18th. This funding level allows for additional time to consider the remaining FY12 appropriations measures.

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS

WIC: The conference agreement provides \$6.6 billion for WIC, an increase of \$570 million over the level in the House-passed bill and \$36 million above the Senate. At this level WIC can provide for the estimated 700,000 that would have been turned under the House-passed bill. The impact of food prices will need to be continually monitored to ensure the program has sufficient funding.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program: The conference agreement provides \$177 million for CSFP, which provides food assistance to particularly vulnerable low-income elderly as well as mothers and young children. At this level CSFP will avoid dropping the 100,000 applicants that would have been required at the House level.

Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA: The conference agreement provides \$1.0 billion for FSIS, which is \$32 million over the House level and will maintain the current workforce of meat inspectors.

Food and Drug Administration: The conference agreement funds the FDA at the Senate level of \$2.5 billion, which is \$334 million over the House level allowing for the FDA to continue implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE APPROPRIATIONS

Law Enforcement

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS): The conference agreement provides \$198.5 million for COPS programs, including \$166 million for the COPS Hiring Program. This is a significant improvement over the House bill, which proposed no funding for the COPS Office, including COPS Hiring. This state, local, and tribal grants program supports law enforcement agencies with hiring and retaining police officers, provides equipment to tribal law enforcement agencies, and provides training on community-oriented policing.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)/U.S. Marshals Service (USMS)/Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)/Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms (ATF): The conference agreement provides increases above the FY 2011 level, and the House and Senate bill levels, for the Department of Justice's Federal law enforcement components, including FBI, DEA, ATF and USMS. In recent years, Congress directed DEA, ATF and USMS to provide additional law enforcement agents to protect the southwest border. The additional funding included in the conference agreement will help support these new agents in addition to the many other law enforcement responsibilities of all four of these agencies.

Economic Census: The conference agreement provides \$690 million for the Census Bureau's periodic censuses and programs, equal to the Senate level and an increase of \$93.2 million above the House level. The conference level will allow the 2012 Economic Census, crucial for future Gross Domestic Product estimates, to go forward. The House level would likely have forced the Census Bureau to cancel the Economic Census.

Federal Prison System: The conference agreement provides \$6.6 billion for the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), which will allow the agency to both absorb the expected increase in the inmate population during FY 2012 and stay on schedule in opening new prisons. Inadequate funding in the House bill would not have been enough for BOP's basic operations and would have also prevented BOP from beginning occupancy at 3 newly built prisons.

Legal Services Corporation (LSC): The conference agreement provides \$348 million for LSC. While this is a significant improvement over the House bill, which proposed only \$300 million for the agency, it is considerably less than we should be investing to address the "

[justice gap](#)

" for low income Americans, particularly during the continuing economic challenges we face.

National Science Foundation: The conference agreement provides \$7 billion for the National Science Foundation, an increase of \$173 million above the FY 2011 level and the House bill level, and \$335 million above the Senate bill level. While we need to be investing much more in basic research at NSF, the additional funding in the conference agreement is an important step in the right direction.

NOAA's Joint Polar Satellite System: The conference agreement provides \$924 million for the JPSS, an increase of \$22.7 million above the House bill and \$3.2 million above the Senate bill. While still \$146 million below the request, the conference level will go farther than either the

House or Senate levels in helping to minimize the anticipated future satellite data gaps.

NASA's James Webb Space Telescope: The conference agreement provides \$529.6 million, the same as the Senate level. The House bill had zeroed out this important program, which will be 100 times more powerful than the Hubble Space Telescope, allowing us to see images of the first glows after the Big Bang and greatly enhancing our scientific understanding of the universe.

TRANSPORTATION, HUD APPROPRIATIONS

Highway and Transit Funding: Includes \$39.8 billion for the federal-aid highway program, \$12.1 billion more than the House draft bill and consistent with the annual funding levels assumed in the surface transportation extension act. The bill includes \$10.5 billion for transit programs, \$2.5 billion more than the House draft bill.

Emergency Relief: The conference agreement includes \$1.66 billion for emergency funding for the backlog of road, highway and bridge projects that were damaged by natural disasters.

AMTRAK: The conference agreement includes \$1.4 billion for Amtrak capital and operating grants. In addition, the final bill deletes onerous language that was included in the Republican Leadership's House draft bill which would have eliminated service on 26 short-distance routes, affecting 15 States and more than 9 million passengers.

National Infrastructure Investment (TIGER Grants): The bill includes \$500 million for the TIGER grant program which will help advance national and regional transportation projects that will benefit both passenger and freight mobility.

Housing Counseling Assistance: The Conference agreement provides \$45 million in funding for Housing Counseling Assistance. This program provides grant funds to local non-profit agencies for reverse mortgage, rental, home pre-purchase and foreclosure prevention counseling. Republican Leadership was successful in eliminating Housing Counseling Assistance in FY2011.

Choice Neighborhoods Initiative: The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is funded at \$120 million in the Conference agreement. Choice is a grant program to revitalize public housing and blighted private housing in mixed-income neighborhoods. This program provides quality low-income housing while the vast majority of these funds create needed construction jobs. Republican Leadership proposed eliminating this program entirely in their FY2012 bill.

Interagency Council on Homelessness: The USICH is funded at \$3.3 million in the conference agreement. This agency was also eliminated in the Republican Leadership's House bill as no funds were provided for FY12. The Council enhances the Federal Government's response to homelessness by coordination between agencies- addressing duplicative programs and identifying best practices.

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH): The Conference agreement provides \$75 million, equal to the President's budget request, for the HUD VASH program. VASH provides long-term housing to homeless veterans. This is an increase of \$25 million over the FY 2011 level.

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